

Message Text

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15 43

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CPR-02 PM-09 NSC-10 M-03 OPR-02 PA-03

RSC-01 SS-15 SY-10 USIA-12 PRS-01 A-01 USSS-00 RSR-01

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P 051145 Z MAY 73 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1750

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CORRECTED COPY (TEXT)

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, TS
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE BOURGUIBA VISIT TO US

REF: STATE 083707

1. ON MAY 5 I SAW HABIB CHATTI, DIRECTOR PRESIDENTIAL CABINET, TO PASS ALONG MESSAGE (REFTEL) THAT SHOULD PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA BE COMTEMPLATING (PRIVATE) VISIT TO US DURING 1973, PRESIDENT NIXON WOULD BE PLEASED TO RECEIVED HIM PROVIDING DATE OF VISIT CONFORMED WITH PRESIDENT' S SCHEDULE. I DESCRIBED NATURE OF " PRIVATE" VISIT AND NOTED THAT PRINCIPAL FEATURE DIFFERENTIATING SUCH VISIT FROM STATE VISIT IS ABSENCE OF FORMALITIES. THERE WOULD BE MEETING WITH PRESIDENT, AND PRESIDENT WOULD GIVE DINNER. ADDITIONALLY, CERTAIN PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS WOULD NO DOUBT INVITE BOURGUIBA TO SPEAK, INCLUDING PERHAPS NATIONAL PRESS CLUB. THUS, APPROPRIATE PUBLICITY WOULD BE ASSOCIATED WITH VISIT.

2. CHATTI SAID THAT NATURE OF VISIT IS " OF NO IMPORTANCE". WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THAT PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO TALK TO PRESIDENT NIXON. HE SAID THAT BOURGUIBA HAS DEEP AFFECTION FOR U. S. AND PERSONAL
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WARMTH FOR PRESIDENT NIXON. BOURGUIBA WOULD PLAN AMONG OTHER THINGS TO DISCUSS MIDDLE EAST SITUATION. RE PUBLICITY, CHATTI SAID THAT PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA, WHO IS A " PASSIONATE" MAN, WOULD CLEARLY WELCOME AN APPROPRIATE FORUM TO EXPAND " BOURGUIBISM".

3. CHATTI EXPRESSED VIEW THAT BOURGUIBA WOULD ACCEPT IDEA OF " PRIVATE" VISIT AND THOUGHT THAT BEST TIME FOR VISIT, FROM BOURGUIBA'S STANDPOINT, WOULD BE OCTOBER OR LATE NOVEMBER. WASHINGTON WEATHER DURING SUMMER MONTHS OF

JULY AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER WOULD BE TOO HOT. CHATTI SAW OUTSIDE POSSIBILITY THAT BOURGUIBA MIGHT WANT TO VISIT U. S. IN LATE JUNE, FOLLOWING HIS VISIT TO ITALY. HE SAID CURRENT PLANS ARE FOR BOURGUIBA TO SPEND 10 DAYS OF REST IN SWITZERLAND COMMENCING JUNE 18 TH, BUT BOURGUIBA MIGHT WISH GO TO US INSTEAD. I NOTED THAT JUNE WEATHER IN WASHINGTON ALSO HOT. IN RESPONSE TO CHATTI'S QUESTION, I SAID IT WAS FOR GOT TO PROPOSE DATE FOR VISIT-- AFTER WHICH WE WOULD VERIFY PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE.

4. CHATTI COMMENTED THAT BOURGUIBA'S DOCTORS WOULD HAVE TO BE CONSULTED REGARDING HOW PRESIDENT COULD BE ENABLED TO ADJUST TO SUBSTANTIAL TIME DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TUNISIA AND U. S. BOURGUIBA IS ON STRICT REGIME REQUIRING HIM, FOR EXAMPLE, TO EAT AT EXACTLY SAME TIME EVERY DAY. THUS, DURING ITALIAN VISIT LUNCHEONS WILL BE SET FOR 2.00 PM RATHER THAN 1:00 PM TO CONFORM WITH TUNISIAN TIME. CHATTI EXPRESSED HOPE DOCTORS COULD WORK SOMETHING OUT.

5. I REPORTED THAT DEPARTMENT HAD INFORMED AMBASSADOR EL GOULLI OF POSSIBILITY OF " PRIVATE" BOURGUIBA VISIT AND THAT I WAS REQUESTING APPOINTMENT WITH MASMOUDI TO DISCUSS MATTER WITH HIM AS WELL. CHATTI SAID THAT GOT HAD RECEIVED CABLE FROM EL GOULLI THREE DAYS AGO INDICATING THAT WHITE HOUSE OFFICIAL HAD INFORMED HIM THAT BOURGUIBA VISIT TO U. S. HAD BEEN APPROVED " IN PRINCIPLE". I SAID THAT SINCE THEN DEPARTMENT HAD INFORMED EL GOULLI OF " PRIVATE" NATURE OF VISIT, AND PRESUMABLY EL GOULLI CABLE REPORTING THIS WAS ON ITS WAY.

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6. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT, IF POSSIBLE, DEPARTMENT INDICATE WHETHER BOURGUIBA VISIT TO U. S. (A) LATE JUNE; (B) OCTOBER; (C) LATE NOVEMBER (AFTER THE 20 TH) WOULD BE CONVENIENT FOR PRESIDENT.

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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